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New York, 8-17 August 2017
Item 5 of the provisional agenda*
Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the Tenth Conference (for distribution only)

Belarus

Summary**

Activities relating to the names of geographical objects in Belarus are regulated by the Law of Belarus, dated 16 November 2010, on names of geographical objects.

Coordination of the work to develop a single approach to the names of geographical objects is carried out by the Toponymic Commission under the Council of Ministers of Belarus, consisting of representatives of ministries, local councils, scientists of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and higher educational institutions and cartography specialists.

Over the past five years, the Toponymic Commission has approved 133 names of geographical objects; developed unified requirements, standards and rules for the assignment of names to components of the road network in honour of prominent State and sociopolitical figures and artists and for their accounting and usage; and approved a list of standardized names in Belarusian and Russian of railway objects of the country.

Public accounting of the names of geographical objects in the country is carried out in the State catalogue of names of geographical objects of Belarus, which is available to the public at http://maps.by. As at 1 May 2017, the State catalogue contained 36,459 names of geographical objects. Names are recorded in the State catalogue in Belarusian and Russian, as well as in Latin letters, in accordance with the romanization system for Belarusian geographical names approved at the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in 2012.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by the State Property Committee of Belarus. The report is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the languages of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/75/CRP.75.

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The names of road network components in the country (by settlements) are recorded in the register of addresses of Belarus, which is accessible at http://nca.by.

Data from the State catalogue and the register of addresses must be used by public entities, other organizations and individuals, including entrepreneurs, carrying out activities in the field of the names of geographical objects.

In 2015, the standardization of names of public transport stopping points in Minsk was carried out. In the process, 850 names for 1,968 stopping points were standardized.

In order to ensure standardization in the field of geographical names of the world, as depicted in cartographic and other works, a reference book of names of States and territories of the world was prepared in 2012 and printed in 2013, establishing unified spelling forms for the names of States and territories of the world, their capitals and centres in the Belarusian, English and Russian languages and providing the names of 194 independent States and 40 territories. The database developed by the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names was used as the basis for spelling the names in English and Russian.

The prospects for the development of Belarusian toponymy lie in the standardization and harmonization of all existing names, the completion of the State catalogue and the issuing of reference and regulatory literature required for the optimization of work by bodies of State administration, legal entities and individuals, including entrepreneurs, when carrying out activities relating to geographical names.